



## Economic & International Development Department

### HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES SECOND FLOOR, MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM CITY 1 BUILDING, 300 N. CAMPBELL STREET JANUARY 25, 2016 4:00 P.M.

#### Mayor

Oscar Leeser

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#### City Manager

Tommy Gonzalez

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in the *Second Floor, Main Conference Room*, City 1 Building, 300 N. Campbell Street, January 25, 2016, 4:00 p.m.

The following commissioners were present:

Chairman William Helm

Commissioner Beatriz Lucero (*left meeting at 5:43 p.m.*)

Commissioner Randy Brock

Commissioner Edgar Lopez

Commissioner George Córdova

The following commissioner was not present:

Commissioner Melinda Skillern

The following City staff members were present:

Ms. Providencia Velázquez, Historic Preservation Officer, Economic & International Development

Mr. Juan Gonzalez, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office

Mr. Adam Train, Planner, Historic Preservation Office, Economic & International Development

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m., quorum present.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Helm asked if anyone present would like to address the Commission on issues not posted on the agenda. There was none.

#### CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Ms. Velázquez explained neither the property owner nor the representative were present for agenda item 1. PHAP15-00048, 900 W. Yandell Drive. She requested commissioners start the meeting with agenda item 2. PHAP16-00002, 301 – 303 Texas Avenue.



## Economic & International Development Department

### Certificate of Appropriateness

*This item was heard after the discussion and action on agenda item 2. PHAP16-00002*

1. **PHAP15-00048:** Being 21 Sunset Heights E. 60 Ft. of 9 To 12 & E. 60 Ft. of N. 20 Ft. of 8, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 900 W. Yandell Drive
- Historic District: Sunset Heights
- Property Owner: Peter Svarzbein
- Representative: Peter Svarzbein
- Representative District: 8
- Existing Zoning: A-2/H (Apartments/Historic)
- Year Built: 1955
- Historic Status: Non-contributing
- Request: Certificate of Appropriateness for the connection of two separate balconies, forming one, larger balcony using metal pickets to match existing
- Application Filed: 12.16.15
- 45 Day Expiration: 1.30.16
- Postponed from 01.11.2016 meeting*

Ms. Velázquez stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the connection of two separate balconies, forming one, larger balcony using metal pickets to match existing. This request was originally brought before commissioners at the December 21, 2015 meeting. At that meeting commissioners and staff requested additional information including a full elevation drawing. The applicant has since submitted the requested documents/plans showing the connection between the two balconies.

Chairman Helm noted it appeared the applicant has provided the requested documents/plans.

Commissioner Lopez asked Ms. Velázquez if the color of the new balcony metal pickets would match the existing.

Ms. Velázquez responded she recommended black, usually iron is painted black or a dark green.

Mr. Mike McKee, contractor, Aspen Construction, representing the property owner, clarified the new metal picket fence will be painted black to match the existing fence. The proposed features, materials, colors, etc., will match what the existing and will continue to wrap all the way around forming one larger balcony.

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Tommy Gonzalez



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Chairman Helm asked Mr. McKee if the steel frame supports the concrete cap.

Mr. McKee explained he does not want to put concrete on top of that due to the weight of the concrete; additionally, the concrete will crack eventually. Sometime in the future, the owner would like to put some kind of composite-like material on top of the steel to keep the steel from getting hot.

Ms. Velázquez asked Mr. McKee if the railing would be exactly as shown in the drawing, there would not be any decorative detail, just a plain metal picket fence.

Mr. McKee replied yes, the property owner does not want to change anything, he wants to make it all original.

Commissioner Lopez clarified the look will be the same on both sides of the structure.

Mr. McKee replied yes.

Chairman Helm clarified the columns on both sides were self-supporting, not anchored to the building.

Mr. McKee agreed.

### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Lopez, seconded by Chairman Helm AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE ITEM 1. AS PRESENTED, THE ONLY SUGGESTION IS TO PAINT IT BLACK AS THE EXISTING.*

*Agenda item was moved to the forefront of the agenda (see **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**)*

2. **PHAP16-00002:** Being 11 Mills SWC of blk., City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Location:                | 301 – 303 Texas Avenue      |
| Historic District:       | Downtown                    |
| Property Owner:          | Bassett Partners EP LLC     |
| Representative:          | Geoffrey Wright             |
| Representative District: | 8                           |
| Existing Zoning:         | C-5/H (Commercial/Historic) |
| Year Built:              | 1929                        |



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Historic Status:	Landmark
Request:	Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of subject property to include new storefronts, signage, lighting, canopies, and awnings; masonry, metal and window repair; the installation of a pool; the construction of new doorways; the installation of a fence; and alteration of designated interior lobby
Application Filed:	1.11.16
45 Day Expiration:	2.25.16

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and explained the property owner requests a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of subject property to include new storefronts, signage, lighting, canopies, and awnings; masonry, metal and window repair; the installation of a pool; the construction of new doorways; the installation of a fence; and alteration of designated interior lobby. The property is currently owned by Mr. Lane Gaddy who is in the process of redeveloping several buildings in downtown. The plan is to redevelop the O.T. Bassett Tower into a hotel.

The structure was designed by Trost & Trost and constructed in 1929; it is considered a historic landmark. The property is located on the corner of Texas Avenue and Stanton Street. The Bassett Tower is an Art Deco building in downtown El Paso with parts of the ground floor in use; however, most of the building is empty.

### WINDOWS

Part of the application calls for repairing the windows; currently, the structure has casement windows. The plan is to seal the casement windows, rendering them inoperable, and then install an interior storm window on the inside.

### ELEVATIONS/STOREFRONTS

All the original storefronts have been altered in some form or fashion. The plan is to convert one of those storefronts into the new entrance to the lobby.

Per the PowerPoint presentation photos, Ms. Velázquez commented on:

1. The corner storefront that is in pretty bad condition which was not a part of Mr. Trost's original plan;
2. Existing storefronts with transom windows, as seen throughout the Downtown historic district, with the signature center awning window for air circulation;
3. The north façade, where the pool is to be located, is a very nondescript feature. No important architectural elements, finishes, details or fabric will be altered because of the pool;



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LEO A DALY

Wright & Dalbin  
ARCHITECTS, INC.

*(Proposed rendering of finished project)*

### ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS/RESTORATIVE WORK

#### 1. Lobby

Ms. Velázquez commented on descriptions of ongoing renovations/alternations/restorative work to the lobby. She noted that this lobby is one of six designated interior spaces in El Paso, all within the Downtown historic district.

#### 2. Window repair

Should the windows not be suitable to repair they will be replaced in kind.

#### 3. Mechanical equipment

To be located on the roof.

#### 4. Elevation drawings

No comment from Ms. Velázquez.

#### 5. New Hotel Entrance

Ms. Velázquez explained the new hotel entrance would not be located where the current entrance is now. The new hotel entrance will be located where one of the current altered storefronts on Texas Avenue is now.

#### 6. Site Plans

No comments from Ms. Velázquez.

#### 7. Details Plans

No comments from Ms. Velázquez.



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The Historic Preservation Office recommends **APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

*The Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines recommend the following:*

- *Windows beyond repair should be replaced to maintain the appearance of the original windows.*
- *Replacement windows should match the same size of the original.*
- *Generally, window glass should be clear.*
- *If windows must be blocked due to interior functional needs, the glass window should still be maintained. Blocking should occur behind the window and the blocking material should be painted grey or black.*
- *Historically, awnings were covered with canvas. Canvas and other synthetics (woven acrylics) should be used on awnings. Shiny fabrics, however, may distract from a building's appearance and should therefore be avoided.*
- *Materials should be compatible with the structure and other elements particular to the historic district.*
- *Awnings and canopies should be placed at the top of openings, but they should not cover important architectural details/elements.*
- *Awnings and canopies should be of an appropriate size and scale in relation to the building's façade.*
- *Fixtures should not extend across the façades of several buildings. Instead, fixtures should fit within vertical elements such as columns.*
- *Awnings should not cover more than one-third of the window opening. Un-proportioned awnings may appear awkward.*
- *Original metal material should be maintained where possible. If metal must be replaced, new metal should match the design, shape and color (if possible) of the original.*
- *Mechanical, electrical and telephone equipment, as well as other obtrusive elements (such as meters) should be screened from view, or moved to the rear of the building.*
- *Preserve original materials or details and the shape of original openings (otherwise the proportions of the façade will be lost). Replace missing original elements such as transom windows.*
- *Storefronts should be fabricated from wood, but metal storefronts will be acceptable provided that the design complements the architectural style of the façade and the surrounding area and entry doors complement the structure's architectural style.*
- *Solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass should be avoided.*
- *The original size, division and shape of display windows should be retained. Glass should be transparent for pedestrian viewing.*
- *The wainscot or panel beneath the display window should be constructed of wood or brick. Plastic and metal sidings are not historic and should be avoided.*
- *Transom windows should be preserved and/or restored where possible. Transom windows may still be found underneath dropped ceilings and exterior coverups.*

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- Signs should not hide or cover any significant detailing and/or architectural detailing and/or architectural features of the building.
- Signs shall not exceed thirty square feet in all commercial and manufacturing districts, and should not exceed six feet in height.
- Signs constructed for landmark buildings or sites must be made of materials attributed to the era in which the buildings or site was constructed.
- Plastics are not permitted.
- For multi-tenant buildings, one sign is allowed for each storefront tenant.
- Neon is permissible if implemented appropriately.
- Flashing, black light, intermittent or moving light or lights are prohibited.
- Colors should complement the building and/or the surrounding area.
- Designs should be innovative and compatible with the building and/or the surrounding area.
- Lettering should not exceed 40% of the total area.
- A minimum border of three feet is required between the sign and the sides and the top of the building wall.
- Signs may be placed on bland wall surfaces only.
- Projecting signs are prohibited at the intersection of building corners, with the exception if they are at right angles to a building front.
- Masonry should be cleaned with low pressure water combined with detergents, and scrubbed with natural bristle brushes.
- On-premise signage should not cover windows, doors, or air vents.
- On-premise signs should be located in close proximity to the activity it is identifying. In most cases, the best location is usually above, on, and/or near the front door.
- Double-faced projecting wall signs must have a minimum nine foot clearance between the bottom of the sign and the ground level.
- Neon is permissible if implemented appropriately.
- Generally, fencing should be of brick and/or wrought iron.
- Generally, lighting provides safety and visibility. It also provides safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; provides security and aids in crime prevention; can accentuate important features, qualities and landmarks; and allows day or night usage of buildings.
- The way in which materials and finishes are combined determines much of a structure's architectural character. It is important to preserve and complement the character of historic structures through proper design and maintenance.
- If masonry must be replaced, match old material with new material as closely as possible.
- Retain original color and texture of masonry when possible.

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*The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*

- *Place non-traditional site features such as swimming pools, playground equipment, concrete pads and basketball goals, tree houses, dumpsters, and trash receptacles only in areas such as rear yards, where they are not visible from the street.*
- *If a storefront feature or an entire storefront is missing, replace it with a new feature or storefront based on accurate documentation. If accurate documentation is not available, then utilize a new design compatible with the building in scale, size, material, and color.*
- *It is appropriate to remove objects and later renovations to reveal original storefront openings obscured by the changes.*
- *For commercial and institutional buildings, design building signs to be integral to the overall building façade. It is not appropriate to cover a large portion of a façade or any significant architectural features with signage.*
- *Mount signs in appropriate locations on façades so that no architectural details or features are obscured, altered, or damaged. On masonry buildings, holes for fasteners should be placed in the mortar joints, not the masonry unit.*
- *Installation of architecturally appropriate lighting that does not alter, damage, destroy, or obscure original or significant architectural fabric.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:*

- *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*
- *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
- *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
- *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

**THE MODIFICATIONS ARE THAT THE ORIGINAL TROST DESIGNED STOREFRONT BE RECONSTRUCTED ON THE CORNER; THAT THE EIFS PROPOSED IN THE ROOF DETAIL BE REPLACED WITH A MORE COMPATIBLE AND VAPOR PERMEABLE MATERIAL; THAT THE APPLICANT RETURN TO THE HLC WITH DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED SIGNAGE INCLUDING DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, LIGHTING, ELEVATIONS, AND SECTIONS; THAT THE APPLICANT RETURN TO THE HLC WITH DETAILS REGARDING THE FENCE INCLUDING MATERIALS, HEIGHT, ELEVATIONS, AND SECTIONS; AND THAT THE APPLICANT RETURN TO THE HLC WITH DETAILS OF THE LIGHTING INCLUDING MATERIALS, SECTIONS, AND DETAILS.**

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Mr. Geoffrey Wright, historic architect for O.T. Bassett Tower, representing Mr. Lane Gaddy, Managing Partner, Bassett Partners EP LLC. Mr. Wright gave a presentation regarding the historic background and the proposed renovations of the O.T. Bassett Tower building. Mr. Wright clarified that this is a rehabilitation project and responded to comments and questions from the Commission.

Mr. Wright explained the National Park Service is providing the tax credit; therefore, to receive those tax credits he must follow their recommendations.

Chairman Helm requested Mr. Wright provide commissioners an up-to-date written record of the National Park Service's decisions/letters. Chairman Helm stated he was not opposed to retaining the restoration on the corner storefront to its 1950 era appearance.

Mr. Wright noted he did not have the designs for the sign from the sign manufacturer; however, he would be happy to bring in those plans for Administrative Approval. Additionally, he presented a lighting concept for commissioners' review; however, he explained that neither the property owner nor the State of Texas and the National Park Service had given their approval.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez what she considered an alternate for the EFIS on the back of the building.

Ms. Velázquez suggested stucco, something that is vapor permeable as EFIS does not let water to be secreted and it creates more damage; furthermore, EFIS is not recommended for historic buildings at all.

Mr. Wright agreed and stated he would be happy to make that change.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez which fence she was referring to in her modifications.

Ms. Velázquez replied the fence in the alleyway that will block the pool from being accessible.

Mr. Wright explained those details would be done by Mr. Leo A. Daly. Mr. Wright will submit those drawings as soon as he receives them from Mr. Daly. Mr. Wright noted the structure shows several setbacks; however, there are no balconies. The new mechanical system, direct exchange (DX) will be for the units on the first floor; the hotel rooms will have variant refrigerated flow. The arm mechanism will be located in an empty ventilated room on the 16<sup>th</sup> floor, air cooled condensers, VRF.

Mr. Wright, Chairman Helm and Commissioner Lopez discussed the proposed building lighting. Mr. Wright explained he would have to work the lighting details out with the building owner, developer and the other architects.



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No further questions for Mr. Wright; discussion closed to commissioners.

Chairman Helm requested commissioners' input regarding the following:

1. Commissioners and Chairman Helm were not opposed to the request made by the National Park Service regarding the 1950's corner storefront.
2. Chairman Helm requested Mr. Wright provide commissioners with documentation of the decisions made by the National Park Service.
3. Chairman Helm requested Mr. Wright provide the lighting details proposed by the Phillips or a conceptual plan from Phillips.

Chairman Helm suggested Mr. Wright bring the lighting details/conceptual plan from Phillips at the same time he presents the fence details.

Ms. Velázquez explained she preferred not to approve the lighting details/conceptual plan administratively because she does not know what the lighting would look like nor how the lighting would be mounted. Her biggest concern with the lighting was whether or not it will go into the terra cotta and how so.

4. Commissioner Lopez requested changing the EFIS to plaster.
5. Chairman Helm asked for type and sample of stone for the project.

Mr. Wright stated he would like commissioners to approve the request subject to the approval of the items pending documentations, plans, etc.. He explained that he would be submitting the plans to the city for permits and it would be nice to have that Certificate of Appropriateness.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez if commissioners could approve the request and that Ms. Velázquez could approve the commissioners concerns administratively.

Ms. Velázquez clarified commissioners would be taking a risk doing that.

Commissioner Lucero and Chairman Helm agreed that there were unanswered questions that prevented approving the request as submitted today.



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Mr. Wright and Chairman Helm commented on the proposed, virtually invisible 3M window film, "Prestige." This film, applied to the inside of the window, redirects light and cuts out a large portion of transmitted light through the glass. This particular film costs \$9.00 per square foot and there are 475 windows in this structure. Mr. Wright and Commissioner Lopez commented on a possible window treatment.

Chairman Helm clarified all the windows were steel framed, casement windows.

Mr. Wright replied yes, all of the windows on the first and second floors. Except many of the first floor windows are aluminum and none of the windows were wood.

Chairman Helm summarized all the storefront windows will be aluminum.

In summary, Chairman Helm asked Mr. Wright to gather all the requested documentation except the lighting plan and fence detail and come back in two weeks.

Commissioner Lucero explained Ms. Velázquez is requesting commissioners to follow her recommended modifications. Furthermore, Commissioner Lucero agrees with the modifications and that those modifications are reasonable.

Mr. Wright stated he would like a very detailed, exact list of what commissioners' want that he bring back in two weeks.

Chairman Helm listed the commissioners' requests as follows:

1. Documentation of what Mr. Wright has agreed to with the National Park Service, so far, on the application;
2. Proposed change to the EFIS;
3. Type and sample of stone replacement on front façade;
4. Defer the lighting on the fence – include the general placement plan, number of fixtures; and
5. Defer the location of the lighting – on the wall, cornices, sections, rooftop levels, diagrammatically

Mr. Wright requested commissioners provisionally approve the Certificate of Appropriateness subject to submittal of requested documentation.

Ms. Velázquez explained the issue is after the drawings are submitted and approved, by either her division or another that legally everything on those drawings can be done. She is requesting the applicant come back in two weeks because staff previously requested drawings for the lighting and signage; however, staff did not receive that information. Staff requested Mr. Wright submit sections of lighting for "ALOFT" over the storefront, to include dimensions, materials and lighting.



## Economic & International Development Department

### MOTION:

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Lucero AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO POSTPONE FOR TWO WEEKS SO THEY WILL HAVE TIME TO PROVIDE THIS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:*

1. *THE CONFIRMATION OF THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AND BUILDING OWNERS, IN PARTICULAR TO THE MAINTAINING AND REHABILITATION OF THE CORNER AS CHANGED IN THE 1950s FROM THE ORIGINAL DESIGN;*
  2. *DETAIL OF THE CHANGE FROM EFIS TO CEMENT BASED PLASTER;*
  3. *SAMPLE OF THE STONE FOR REPLACEMENT AT THE CORNER FRONT FAÇADE;*
  4. *ADDITIONAL DETAILS REQUESTED FOR THE PROPOSED SIGNAGE, INCLUDING ELEVATIONS, SECTIONS, MATERIALS, LIGHTING, AND DIMENSIONS SO THAT COMMISSIONERS CAN TAKE ACTION ON THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.*
  5. *ANYTHING THEY CANNOT PROVIDE INFORMATION ON, COMMISSIONERS WILL HAVE TO SPLIT THIS INTO TWO CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS.*
  6. *DETAILS ON THE FENCE*
  7. *DETAILS ON THE BUILDING LIGHTING*
3. Addresses of property HLC commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. January 25, 2016 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the February 8, 2016 meeting. February 8, 2016 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be schedule for the February 22, 2016 meeting.

*No address requests from commissioners for staff to review or investigate.*

### HLC Staff Report

4. Update on Administrative Review Cases since the last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

*No comments from commissioners.*

### MOTION:

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Córdova AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE HLC STAFF REPORT ATTACHMENT "A".*

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### Other Business – Discussion and Action

#### 5. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for January 11, 2016

Chairman Helm asked commissioners if they had any additions, corrections and/or revisions.

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Córdova, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 11, 2016.*

#### 6. Discussion and action on letter to State Board of Review for the nomination of the Magoffin Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places

Ms. Velázquez stated the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Magoffin Historic District was reviewed at the State Board of Review meeting held Saturday, January 23, 2015. The State Board of Review approved the nomination and recommended it to the National Park Service for approval as well.

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE HLC MEETING AT 5:51 P.M.*